

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A method of securely supporting password change comprising [[the steps of]]:
 - detecting an occurrence of a password change operation in execution on a system;
 - detecting [[the]] a new password when provided; and,
 - storing data indicative of the new password in a database other than [[the]] a password database associated with the password change operation for later retrieval, the data indicative of the new password for use in providing the new password [[provision]] to the system automatically.
2. (currently amended) A method of securely supporting password change according to claim 1 wherein [[the step of]] detecting an occurrence of a change of password operation in execution on a system comprises [[the step of]] detecting a new password prompt.
3. (currently amended) A method of securely supporting password change according to claim 1 comprising [[the steps of]]:
 - prompting a user to provide authorization data, the authorization data being other than the new password; and,
 - associating the authorization data with the new password.
4. (currently amended) A method of securely supporting password change according to claim 1, wherein [[the step of]] detecting the new password comprises [[the step of]] detecting the new password at least two separate times.

5. (currently amended) A method of securely supporting password change comprising [[the steps of]]:

detecting a change password operation in execution on a system for changing a first password;

displaying to a user a prompt for a new password, ~~the prompt independent of the password change operation~~ in response to detecting the change password operation in execution and other than occurring as an operation of the change password operation;

receiving the new password;

performing an operation to change the first password to the new password in the system; and,

storing the new password in a database independent of the change password operation and independent of [[the]] a database where the-at least a changed password is stored by the change password operation.

6. (currently amended) A method of securely supporting password change according to claim 5 wherein [[the step of]] detecting the change password operation in execution on a system comprises [[the step of]] detecting password change command options.

7. (currently amended) A method of securely supporting password change comprising [[the steps of]]:

detecting a password change operation in execution on a system;

displaying to a user a prompt for authentication information in response to detecting the change password operation in execution and other than occurring as an operation of the change password operation, ~~the prompt independent of the password change operation~~;

receiving the authentication information;

when the authentication information is indicative of a known user, performing an operation to change [[the]] a password of the known user to a new password in the system; and,

storing the new password in a database independent of the change password operation and of the database where [[the]] at least a changed password is stored.

8. (currently amended) A method of securely supporting password change according to claim 7 wherein the prompt for authentication information is a prompt for biometric information.

9. (currently amended) A method of securely supporting password change according to claim 8 comprising [[the step of]]:

providing biometric information;

processing the provided biometric information to provide biometric data;

comparing the biometric data with a stored template; and

in dependence upon a comparison result retrieving a user password from a database.

10. (original) A method of securely supporting password change according to claim 7 wherein the prompt for authentication information is a prompt for information relating to data stored [[on]] in a memory of a smart card.

11. (currently amended) A method of securely supporting password change according to claim 7 wherein [[the step of]] performing an operation to change the password comprises [[the step of]] providing the new password to the system.

12. (currently amended) A method of securely supporting password change according to claim 7 wherein [[the step of]] performing an operation to change the password comprises [[the step of]] prompting the user to select between provision of the new password and automatic generation of the new password.

13. (currently amended) A method of securely supporting password change according

to claim 12 wherein [[the step of]] performing an operation to change the password comprises [[the step of]] automatically generating the new password.

14. (currently amended) A method of securely supporting password change according to claim 7 wherein [[the step of]] performing an operation to change the password comprises [[the step of]] automatically generating the new password.

15. (original) A method of securely supporting password change according to claim 13 wherein the automatically generated new password is unknown to the user.

16. (original) A method of securely supporting password change according to claim 15 wherein the automatically generated new password is an encryption key.

17. (original) A method of securely supporting password change according to claim 16 wherein data secured with the new password is encrypted using the encryption key.

18. (currently amended) A method of securely supporting password change according to claim 7 comprising [[the step of]]:

performing another operation to change another password of the known user to the new password.

19. (currently amended) A method of securely supporting password change according to claim 7 comprising [[the step of]]:

determining within the password database and associated with a same user all passwords identical to the password being changed and automatically performing at least another operation to change each identical password of the known user to the new password.

20. (currently amended) A method of securely supporting a password change

comprising [[the steps of]]:

detecting a password change operation in execution on a system having a known user authorized thereon;

automatically [[generated]] generating a new password in response to detecting the password change operation and other than occurring as an operation of the change password operation;

performing an operation to change [[the]] a password to a new password in the system; and,

storing the new password in a database independent of the change password operation and of the database where [[the]] at least a changed password is stored.

21. (original) A method of securely supporting password change according to claim 20 wherein the automatically generated new password is unknown to the user.

22. (original) A method of securely supporting password change according to claim 21 wherein the automatically generated new password is an encryption key.

23. (original) A method of securely supporting password change according to claim 22 wherein data secured with the new password is encrypted using the encryption key.